



IMAGE I

Headrest/Stool

Pokot peoples or Turkana peoples, Kenya

Wood; 18 x 18 x 8.5 cm

This sculpture was made by either the Pokot or Turkana peoples of Kenya, a country in East Africa. Some scholars believe this sculpture served two functions—a headrest and a stool.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

- Describe the headrest/stool in this photograph.
- What type of *lines* do you see (horizontal, vertical, or both) in this headrest/stool?
- What *shapes* do you see in this headrest/stool?
- What material(s) or *medium* did the artist use to create this headrest/stool? How do you think the artist created this headrest/stool?
- If you could touch this headrest/stool, how do you think it would feel? What is the *texture* of this headrest/stool?
- Does this headrest, or *elements* that create this headrest/stool, remind you of anything in nature (plants, animals, etc.)?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Among the Pokot peoples of Kenya, this two-legged style of headrest is used by young men, and prevents their elaborate hairdos from touching the ground while they sleep.

- How is this headrest the same or different from the headrest that you use when you sleep?

Photo by Denis J. Nervig



IMAGE II

Headrest, musamo
Luba, Democratic Republic of the Congo
Wood; 13.9 x 91.307 cm

This sculpture was made by the Luba peoples who live in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country in Central Africa.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

- Describe the headrest in this photograph.
- What type of *lines* do you see (horizontal, vertical, or both) in this headrest?
- What *shapes* do you see in this headrest?
- What material(s) or *medium* did the artist use to create this headrest? How do you think the artist created this headrest?
- Is this headrest *figurative* or *abstract* in its *composition*?

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

Headrests were so highly valued by the Luba peoples that they were sometimes buried with their owner.

- Who do you imagine was the owner of this headrest? How old were they? Were they male or female?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- How is this headrest the same or different from the headrest in IMAGE I?

Photo by Denis J. Nervig



IMAGE III

Headrest, mutsago
Shona peoples, Zimbabwe
Wood; 20.4 x 15.8 x 7 cm

This sculpture was made by the Shona peoples, who live in Zimbabwe, a country in Southern Africa.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

- Describe the headrest in this photograph.
- What type of *lines* do you see (horizontal, vertical, or both) in this headrest?
- What *shapes* and *patterns* do you see in this headrest?
- What material(s) or *medium* did the artist use to create this headrest? How do you think the artist created this headrest?
- Is this headrest *figurative* or *abstract* in its *composition*?

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

The Shona peoples consider headrests to be important means of communication. They slept on headrests, such as this one, when they were interested in speaking to ancestors in the spirit worlds.

- If you could communicate with one of your ancestors while you were dreaming, what would you say to them? What do you think they would say to you?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- How is this headrest the same or different from the headrest in IMAGES I and II?

Photo by Denis J. Nervig



IMAGE IV

Headrest

Tsonga peoples, Mozambique and South Africa

Wood; 68 x 15.9 x 6 cm

This sculpture was made by the Tsonga peoples, who live in Mozambique and South Africa, countries in Southern Africa.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

- Describe the headrest in this photograph.
- What type of *lines* do you see (horizontal, vertical, or both) in this headrest?
- What *shapes* and *patterns* do you see in this headrest?
- What material(s) or *medium* did the artist use to create this headrest? How do you think the artist created this headrest?
- Is this headrest *figurative* or *abstract* in its *composition*?

USE YOUR IMAGINATION

This headrest is composed of two headrest sculptures, connected by a wooden chain.

- Why do you think the artist decided to connect these two headrests? Who do you imagine was the owner(s) of this headrest?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- How is this headrest the same or different from the headrest in IMAGE II?

Photo by Denis J. Nervig



IMAGE V

Headrest, kali

Fiji

Carved wood with inlaid beads; 21.3 x 44.9 x 8 cm

This sculpture was made in the region of Fiji, an island nation in the South Pacific Ocean, west of Tonga. In Fiji, headrests were reserved for chiefs and were possibly intended to preserve the elaborate coiffures worn by those of high status.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

- Describe the headrest in this photograph.
- What type of *lines* do you see (horizontal, vertical, or both) in this headrest?
- What *shapes* do you see in this headrest?
- What material(s) or *medium* did the artist use to create this headrest? How do you think the artist created this headrest?
- Is this headrest *figurative* or *abstract* in its *composition*?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

In the regions of Fiji and Tonga, headrests sometimes *symbolize* a mother's arms and the comfort and nurturing that implies.

- How is this headrest the same or different from the headrest in IMAGE III? Do you think the headrest in IMAGE III is *symbolic*? If so, what do you believe it symbolizes?

Photo by Denis J. Nervig



IMAGE VI

Ceramic Pillow
12th Century, China
Stoneware; 13.2 x 15.5 x 8.8 cm

This ceramic pillow was made in China during the 12th Century. The earliest Chinese ceramic pillows probably date to the 8th Century, and were quite small. For this reason, scholars believe that they were used as armrests rather than headrests.

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

- Describe the headrest in this photograph.
- What type of *lines* do you see (horizontal, vertical, or both) in this headrest?
- What *shapes* do you see in this headrest?
- What colors are present in this headrest?
- What material(s) or *medium* did the artist use to create this headrest? How do you think the artist created this headrest?
- Is this headrest *figurative* or *abstract* in its *composition*?

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

- How is this headrest the same or different from the headrests that you have seen in previous images?
- All of the headrests that you have seen in previous images are made of wood. Why do you believe the Chinese chose to make headrests and armrests out of porcelain rather than wood?

Photo by Denis J. Nervig